



City of Somerville

# PLANNING BOARD

City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**TO:** Planning Board  
**FROM:** Planning, Preservation & Zoning (PPZ) Staff  
**SUBJECT:** 28-44 Broadway, P&Z 21-029  
**POSTED:** March 11, 2022

**RECOMMENDATION:** No change

This memo is supplemental to the PPZ Staff Memo dated December 8, 2021, and provides additional analysis and updated recommended conditions to reflect the updated proposal submitted on March 7, 2022.

## ANALYSIS

Since the last public hearing with the Planning Board, the Applicant has made multiple changes to the proposal. Some of the most significant changes are summarized here:

- The design of the facades has been significantly altered.
- The number of dwelling units has decreased from ninety-six (96) to eighty-one (81); this results in the number of ADUs provided decreasing from eighteen (18) to sixteen (16). The mix of unit sizes has also changed.
- The amount of commercial space has decreased from 11,000sf to 9,709sf. The minimum required amount of ACE space has correspondingly decreased from approx. 570sf to 474sf.
- The building's setback from the curb of Mt Vernon St has been increased from 12' to 18'-10".
- The building has been pulled back 5' from the shared lot line with 7 George St.
- The residential lobby has been moved from the middle of the Broadway façade to the corner of building closest to the intersection of Broadway and George St.
- Long-term bicycle parking has been consolidated in the garage rather than being split between the garage and ground floor. The number of long-term bicycle parking spaces has increased from ninety-three (93) to ninety-eight (98).
- The transformer has been moved to the interior of the building.

Staff believes that these changes have resulted in an improved final design, allowing the proposal to better achieve the intent of the SZO and the goals of SomerVision 2040.

For example, the elimination of fifteen (15) dwelling units is a significant change and allows the remaining units to be more generously sized. This change will allow the Applicant to more easily comply with the Housing Division's policy that three-bedroom ADUs should be a minimum of 1,000 square feet; all eight of the 3-bedroom units currently proposed are at least 1,000 square feet, whereas in the previous iteration none of the 3-bedroom units were larger than 956 square feet.

Similarly, the increased building setback along Mt Vernon Street provides additional space for commercial uses to spill outside the building without impacting normal usage of the sidewalk itself.

While Staff do have some concerns about the current design, these can all be addressed through by attaching conditions to the decision. For example, Staff are concerned that, as currently proposed, the relocated BlueBikes station may need to be reconfigured in order to be feasible without depending on the removal of public street trees. This reconfiguration would require that additional materials be purchased. To address this concern, Staff have modified the standard condition regarding compliance with the approved Mobility Management Plan (MMP) to make explicitly clear that the Applicant will bear any costs associated with implementation of the MMP.

Staff have made some additions and modifications to the list of recommended conditions with the intent of providing additional clarity that may have been missing in the previous list of recommended conditions. After careful review, Staff are comfortable with the changes, and believe that potentially negative impacts have been further minimized in the latest version of the project.

## **CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS**

Only findings number 5 and 7 from the December 8 Staff Memo are affected by this update. Updated information relative to those required considerations is provided below:

- *The ability of the development proposal to meet the demand for dwelling units of various types, sizes, and bedroom counts.*

The proposal includes twenty-nine (29) studio units, thirty-six (36) 1-bedroom units, two (2) 1.5-bedroom units, six (6) 2-bedroom units, and eight (8) 3-bedroom units. The distribution of units is consistent with the findings of study conducted by MAPC which found that a dearth of one- and two-bedroom units contributes to increased demand on larger units that could otherwise be utilized by families.

At least four (4) of the 3-bedroom units will be ADUs, as required by the Ordinance, and the remaining twelve (12) required ADUs will be distributed among the other unit sizes.

1. *The number of motor vehicle parking spaces proposed for development within a Transit Area.*

The property is within the 0.25mi Transit Area and is proposing twenty-six (26) motor vehicle parking spaces, twenty-two (22) of which have been identified as being for the eighty-one (81) residential units. As the property is permitted to have a maximum of one parking space per residential unit, this is well below the maximum number of spaces permitted.

## **PERMIT CONDITIONS**

*Language to be removed is ~~struck~~, and language to be added is underlined.*

Should the Board approve the required Site Plan Approval for the 6-story LEED Platinum General Building, PPZ Staff recommends that the Board make the following changes to the conditions from the December 8 Staff Memo:

#### Permit Validity

- Alterations to the design or location of the transformer ~~vault~~ room is a major amendment to the approved plans, and is permitted only as a Plan Revision in accordance with Article 15 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance.

#### Public Record

- ~~Physical copies of all submittal materials as permitted by the Review Boards must be submitted for the public record in accordance with the document format standards of the ISD/PB/ZBA Submittal Requirements. One (1) physical copy of the original application materials and one (1) digital and (1) physical copy of all required application materials reflecting any physical changes required by the Board, if applicable, must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division for the public record.~~

#### Legal Agreements

- A public right-of-way or pedestrian access easement must be provided in perpetuity by a covenant or other deed restriction for the full area of the sidewalk and curb ramps provided within the frontage area of the lot. Final easement language must be approved by the City Solicitor.

#### Site Design

- Frontage area provided for a widened sidewalk along George Street must be designed and paved to properly correspond with any sidewalk improvements approved within the public right-of-way ~~and a pedestrian access easement must be provided in perpetuity by a covenant or other deed restriction.~~
- Frontage area provided for a widened sidewalk along Mt Vernon St must be designed and paved to properly correspond with any sidewalk improvements approved within the public right-of-way.
- Final sidewalk design of George St, Mt Vernon St, and Broadway must be approved by relevant City Departments prior to applying for a Building Permit.

#### Mobility

- The property owner and applicable future tenants shall comply with the Mobility Management Plan dated April 16, 2021, as approved and conditioned by the Director of Mobility. The Applicant is responsible for all costs associated with implementation of the approved Mobility Management Plan.

Should the Board approve the required Special Permit to establish a Household Living use, PPZ Staff recommends that the Board make the following changes to the conditions from the December 8 Staff Memo:

Parking

- At least ~~five (5)~~ twenty percent (20%) of the total number of commercial vehicular parking spaces, rounded up, must be offered annually to all ADU households as a right of first refusal until each parking space is either rented or leased.